

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing a print of a digital image registered by a registrant in response to an order from a viewer comprising:

a first step of receiving the digital image from the registrant;

5 a second step of registering the received digital image;

a third step of showing the registered digital image to the viewer;

a fourth step of accepting the order for the print of the digital image from the viewer;

a fifth step of producing the ordered print of the digital image; and

10 a sixth step of billing the print charge to the registrant.

2. The method according to claim 1,

wherein the first step includes a step of receiving a digital image with a discrimination denoting that the print charge of the digital image is to be paid by the
15 registrant;

wherein the second step includes a step of recording the digital image with the discrimination together with the discrimination; and

wherein the sixth step includes a step of billing the print charge of the print of the digital image with the discrimination to the registrant.

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3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the third step includes a step of permitting only a viewer with a predetermined identification to view the image with the discrimination.

4. The method according to claim 2, wherein the fourth step includes a step of allowing only a viewer with a predetermined identification to order the print of the digital image with the discrimination.

5 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first step is carried out through a computer communication with the registrant.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the third and the fourth steps are carried out through a computer communication with the viewer.

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7. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of setting a limit to the order from the viewer, wherein the fourth step includes a step for accepting the order leading to the sixth step only when the order is within the limit.

15 8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the limit is a sum of print charge.

9. The method according to claim 7, wherein the limit is the number of times of the orders.

20 10. The method according to claim 7, wherein the limit is the number of ordered prints.

11. The method according to claim 7 further comprising a step of billing the print charge exceeding the limit to the viewer.

12. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of making it possible to accept a print order whose print charge is paid by the viewer and a step of billing the print charge to the viewer.

13. The method according to claim 12 further comprising a step of adding the number of prints of a digital image on the viewer's account to that of the same digital image on the register's account, wherein the fifth step produces the sum of the number of the of prints on such a digital image.

14. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of setting a time limit to the fourth step, whereby the fourth step accepts the order leading to the sixth step only when the order is made within the time limit.

15. The method according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of orders are acceptable for a period, and wherein the fifth step produces the prints by summing up the orders within the period with respect to each digital image.

16. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of accepting an order for purchasing a product of digital contents relating to the digital image and a step of selling the product by copying the digital contents on a recording medium of the viewer.

17. A method of providing prints of a digital image registered by a registrant in response to orders from a plurality of viewers comprising:

a first step of receiving the digital image from the registrant;

a second step of registering the received digital image;
a third step of showing the registered digital image to the viewers;
a fourth step of accepting the orders for the print of the digital image from the viewers;
5 a fifth step of summing up the orders accepted within the period; and
a sixth step of producing the prints based on the fifth step.

18. The method according to claim 17, wherein at last the fourth to the sixth steps are repeated.

19. The method according to claim 17 further comprising a step of setting a time limit to the fourth step, whereby the fourth step accepts the order leading to the sixth step only when the order is made within the time limit.

20. The method according to claim 17, wherein the third step includes a step for permitting only a viewer with a predetermined identification.

21. The method according to claim 17 further comprising a step of billing a print charge to the registrant based on the fifth step.

22. An apparatus for providing a print of a digital image comprising:
an image input that receives a digital image from an image registrant;
a memory that records the received digital image;
an image output that outputs the digital image in order to make a viewer view
25 the recorded digital image;

a print order acceptor that accepts an order for a print of the viewed digital image;

an image data output that outputs an image data of the ordered digital image to a printer; and

5 a billing data output that outputs a data for billing the print charge to the registrant.

23. A method of providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser

10 comprising:

a first step of receiving information of the image from the registrant through a computer communication;

a second step of producing the print of the image based on the information; and

a third step of billing a print charge to the registrant.

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24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the information of the image is a kind of information including an image data of a digital image.

25. The method according to claim 23, wherein the information of the image includes

20 information that specifies the image.

26. The method according to claim 25, wherein the specified image is an image recorded on a film.

27. The method according to claim 25, wherein the specified image is a digital image.

28. The method according to claim 27 further comprising a step of obtaining the
5 image data of the specified digital image from outside.

29. The method according to claim 23 further comprising a step of receiving information regarding the kind of the recording medium on which the digital contents purchased by the contents purchaser are recorded.

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30. The method according to claim 29 further comprising
a step of selecting a paper for the print and contents of the print other than the image based on the information regarding the kind of the recording medium, and
a step of printing the contents of the print other than the image in a
15 predetermined area of the paper.

31. The method according to claim 23 further comprising a step of receiving information to deliver the print to the purchaser.

20 32. A method of providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser comprising:

a first step of accepting a contact from the purchaser with an authorization by the registrant;

25 a second step of producing the print of the image based on the authorization; and

a third step of billing the print charge to the registrant.

33. The method according to claim 32, wherein the authorization includes information regarding the image.

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34. The method according to claim 32, wherein the authorization includes a password for request to produce the print.

35. The method according to claim 32, wherein the first step includes a step of

10 accepting the contact from the purchaser through a personal computer of the purchaser.

36. An apparatus providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser

15 comprising:

an image information input that receives information of an image connected with the digital contents purchased by a purchaser; and

a billing data output that outputs a data for billing the print charge to registrant.

20 37. A method of providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser comprising:

a first step of selling the product of digital contents to a purchaser; and

a second step of outputting information relating to the image through a

25 computer communication for the purpose of producing the print.

38. The method according to claim 37, wherein the first step includes a step of copying the digital contents on a recording medium of the purchaser.

5 39. The method according to claim 37 further comprising a step of making the purchaser select one of a plurality of images relating to the digital contents.

40. The method according to claim 37, wherein the information includes an image data of the digital image.

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41. The method according to claim 37, wherein the information includes information that specifies the image.

42. The method according to claim 37 further comprising

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a step of getting information necessary for delivering the print to the purchaser; and

a step of outputting information for the delivery through a computer communication.

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43. An apparatus for providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser comprising:

a contents seller that sells digital contents to a purchaser;

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a delivery information input for inputting an information for deliver the print;

an information output that outputs an information of the image relating to the product of digital contents and the information for deliver.

44. A method for providing a purchaser of a product of the digital contents with a
5 print of an image registered by a registrant relating to the product of digital contents to comprising:

a first step of having the registrant sell the product of digital contents to the purchaser;

- 10 a second step of having a printer receive information relating to the registered image from the registrant;

a third step of having the printer produce the print of the image for the purchaser based on the information; and

a fourth step of having the printer bill the print charge to the registrant.

- 15 45. The method according to claim 44, wherein the second step is carried out through a computer communication with the registrant.

46. The method according to claim 44 further comprising

- 20 a step of having the registrant issue an identification of the image to the purchaser, and a step of having the printer receive the identification from the purchaser.

47. The method according to claim 44 further comprising

- 25 a step of having the registrant issue a password to the purchaser, and wherein the third step is only effective when the password is input to the printer.